



IOWA WorkNet

Putting
Iowa
to Work

A Labor Market Information Publication

First Quarter 2003

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"Jobless" Recovery Poses Challenge for 2003 Graduates



Compared to the boom times of the late 1990's, many employers describe the 2003 job market as "fair," according to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

The reasons for diminished job opportunities for this year's graduates are closely tied to the current economic climate. Due to the time that it is taking for the economy to recover from the 2001 recession, most companies are still reluctant to hire. Many of them are faced with budgetary cutbacks, hiring freezes, layoffs, and low attrition that have been the norm for the past two years.

The **Job Outlook 2003** survey conducted by NACE indicates

that cutbacks are deepest in the manufacturing sector. Of the 353 employers surveyed by the association this year, 42.4 percent plan to hire fewer college graduates than they did in 2002, and 36.3 percent anticipate hiring more. The remainder expect hiring levels to stay the same. The association is projecting a 3.6 percent overall decline in job opportunities for the class of 2003, which comes on the heels of an estimated 19.7 percent decline in 2002.

How does a graduate find a job in a tough market?

The professionals who staff the Career Centers at Iowa's three state universities all agree that having participated in a cooperative education program, internship or practicum gives graduates a definite advantage in landing the first "big" job after graduation. In fact, an internship, which was once rated seventh among the best ways to attract new graduates, is now acknowledged as the best way for a company to hire a new employee. These opportunities also enable graduates to sample the business world firsthand while gaining invaluable work experience. According to Susan Schweiger, Associate Director of Liberal Arts and Sciences Career Services at the University of Northern Iowa, an internship is valuable regardless of the major or type of employer. "The graduate who has at least one internship experience is a more competitive candidate."

The class of 2003 was the last one to enter college while the stock market was still rising, but it is graduating into the worst hiring slump experienced in years. Because of the current nature of the job market, the passive job search that may have worked during the boom times of the late 1990's will not work now. The graduates of 2003 will have to work harder and more aggressively to find a job. This means that they will have to use a variety of resources in their job search including contacting employment agencies, viewing job listings on the Internet, networking, accessing employers' web sites, and visiting their campus career centers. They should also have their resumes and cover letters reviewed for feedback. Once they have applied for a specific job, it is also important to periodically check the status of one's application and to convey an interest in the position.

For the third year in a row, employers responding to the NACE survey said that communication skills are at the top of their list of desirable qualities in new hires. They also value candidates with honesty and integrity, teamwork skills, interpersonal skills, motivation and a strong work ethic. Iowa's university career specialists added that employers are more concerned about skills than the type of major. For some positions, such as business

administration jobs, financial service advisors and sales, "all majors" are encouraged to apply.

According to NACE, most of the companies that plan to hire in 2003 are small to mid-sized firms that tend to use their Web site or a regional job listing service, solicit recommendations from current employees (referrals) or select job candidates from their internship program. Some smaller firms make use of temporary positions to try out potential employees and to minimize the risk of having to lay off permanent employees if the economy takes a turn for the worse. For this reason, graduates may also want to consider checking employment opportunities with a temporary staffing agency.

One possible source for employment that hasn't been that visible for a while is the federal government. Due to an impending retirement wave, the federal government is launching a recruiting campaign to renew workers' interest in public-sector jobs. The retirements, which are expected over the next five years, could exceed 50 percent of the workforce in some agencies. To encourage more young people to apply for federal jobs, the application process is being streamlined. Graduates can access federal government job listings at: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Before heading out into the job market, graduates should set realistic expectations. They need to take the time to explore their values, and then research companies that fit comfortably with their personal as well as work values. Each company's culture is different, and knowing something about the company beforehand allows for a better match between employer and employee.

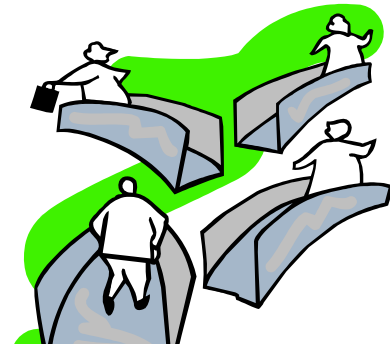
Although the job market seems grim, the prospects of finding a job are far from hopeless. According to employers, a couple of factors are working in favor of new graduates. First, many employers are looking to upgrade the skills of their workforce. Second, employers continue to keep the pipeline open to meet the demand for well-educated workers that will be needed when the recovery takes hold. Based on what employers learned from the tight job market in 1998 and 1999, they want to be fully prepared to ride the next wave of prosperity by being staffed with the right talent.

LMI focus

Top 10 Qualities/Skills Employers Seek		Top 10 Places Employers Find New Hires	
1	Communication skills (verbal and written)	1	Internship program
2	Honesty/integrity	2	Co-op program
3	Teamwork skills	3	On-campus interviews
4	Interpersonal skills	4	Employee referrals
5	Motivation/initiative	5	Career/job fairs
6	Strong work ethic	6	Faculty contacts
7	Analytical skills	7	Internet job postings (own company web site)
8	Flexibility/adaptability	8	Job postings to career offices (printed)
9	Computer skills	9	Student organizations/clubs
10	Organizational skills	10	Internet job postings (campus web site)

Annual Salary Ranges for Common Academic Majors (Bachelor's level)

Mechanical Engineering	\$45,000-\$50,500
Electrical Engineering	\$47,500-\$52,000
Civil Engineering	\$39,000-\$51,500
Chemical Engineering	\$46,500-\$48,500
Accounting	\$37,500-\$39,000
Finance	\$39,500-\$51,500
Marketing	\$35,500-\$39,000
Computer Science	\$49,000-\$53,000
Sciences	\$40,500-\$44,500
Social Sciences	\$29,000-\$33,000
Liberal Arts	\$33,500-\$37,000



Source: *Job Outlook 2003*, National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder.

On the Economy

College graduates are not the only ones faced with a difficult job market. It's been two years since the official start of the recession, and there is still little evidence that a pickup in hiring is imminent. The state's unemployment rate was 4.0 percent in March and averaged 3.9 percent for the first quarter of the year. Although Iowa's unemployment rate was low compared to most states, long-term joblessness is becoming a problem. Statistics on the insured unemployed indicate that the duration of unemployment for persons collecting jobless benefits had increased to about 13.5 weeks for the twelve-month period ending in March.

Nonfarm employment, a key indicator used by the Bureau of Economic Research in determining recession dates, has been on a downward slide for over two years. Nonfarm employment totaled 1,441,600 in March 2003, 32,500 less than the level of 1,474,100 reported for March 2001. Manufacturing lost the most jobs during the past two years followed by Trade and Transportation. Of the Manufacturing industries, machinery, transportation equipment, fabricated metal and electrical equipment incurred the larger losses. Two sectors—Financial Activities and Education and Health—continued to grow despite the sluggish economy.

U. S. STATISTICAL UPDATE

Labor Force Data* (Seasonally Adjusted)

	Jan 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2003	Mar 2002
Civilian Labor Force	145,838,000	145,857,000	145,793,000	144,367,000
Employed	137,536,000	137,408,000	137,348,000	136,143,000
Unemployed	8,302,000	8,450,000	8,445,000	8,224,000
Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.8%	5.8%	5.7%

Historical Labor Force Series*

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Civilian Labor Force	137,673,000	139,368,000	142,583,000	143,734,000	144,863,000
Employed	131,463,000	133,488,000	136,891,000	136,933,000	136,485,000
Unemployed	6,210,000	5,880,000	5,692,000	6,801,000	8,378,000
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.8%

Unemployment Rates for Iowa and Neighboring States National Rankings, March 2003			Consumer Price Indexes* (All Items)			
Rank	State	Rank	CPI-U			
			Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002	% Chg Mar 2002
1	South Dakota	3.2	U.S. City Average 1967 = 100 1982-84 = 100			
2	Nebraska	3.7				
5	Iowa	4.0				
12	Minnesota	4.4	CPI-W Mar 2003			
18	Missouri	4.8				
25	Wisconsin	5.5				
45	Illinois	6.6	U.S. City Average 1967 = 100 1982-84 = 100			
			537.1	533.7	520.2	
			180.3	179.2	174.7	3.2%

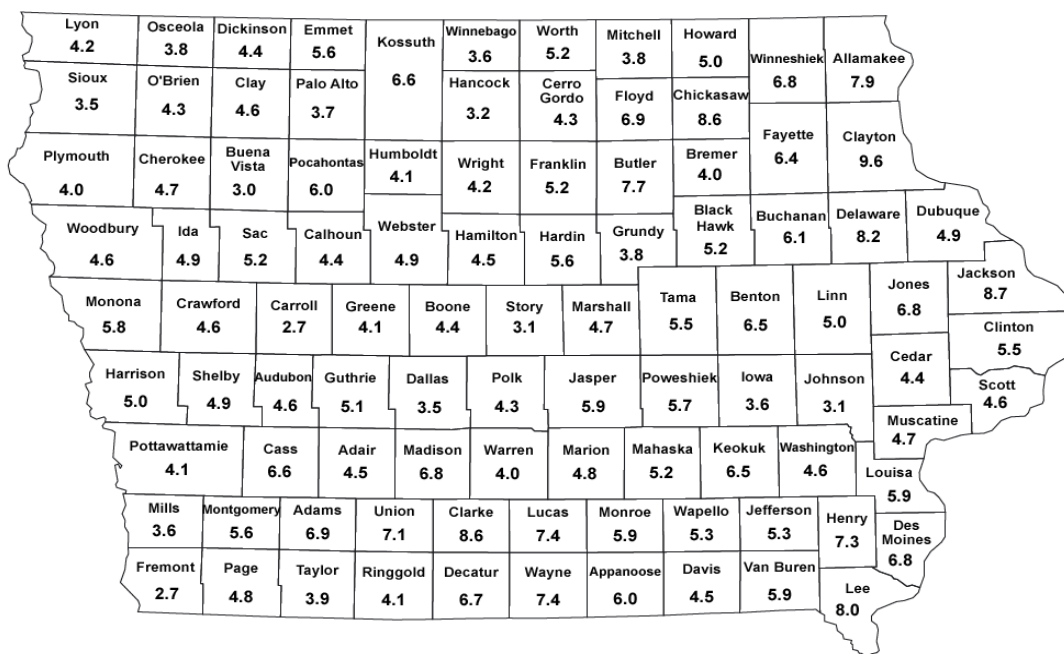
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

*The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) extends coverage to such groups as salaried workers, the self-employed, retirees, and the unemployed. The index covers approximately 80 percent of the total noninstitutional civilian population of the United States. The CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents about one-half of the population covered by the CIP for All urban Consumers.

Statewide and Local Labor Force Data

State of Iowa			
	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Labor Force	1,648,700	1,652,600	1,655,800
Unemployed	65,600	65,500	63,800
Percent Unemployed	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%
Employed	1,583,100	1,587,100	1,592,000

Iowa Unemployment Rates by County March 2003



Source: Labor Market Information. Iowa Workforce Development

Metropolitan Statistical Area Data March 2003

	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Cedar Rapids MSA	118,000	112,100	5,900	5.0
Des Moines MSA	275,600	264,000	11,600	4.2
Dubuque MSA	49,900	47,500	2,400	4.9
Iowa City MSA	76,300	73,900	2,400	3.1
Sioux City MSA	66,000	63,000	3,000	4.6
Waterloo-Cedar Falls MSA	71,800	68,000	3,700	5.2
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*Davenport-Moline-Rock Island MSA	187,300	176,800	10,500	5.6
**Omaha MSA	420,120	402,600	17,500	4.2

Source: Labor Market Information Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development.

*Prepared by Illinois Department of Employment Security.

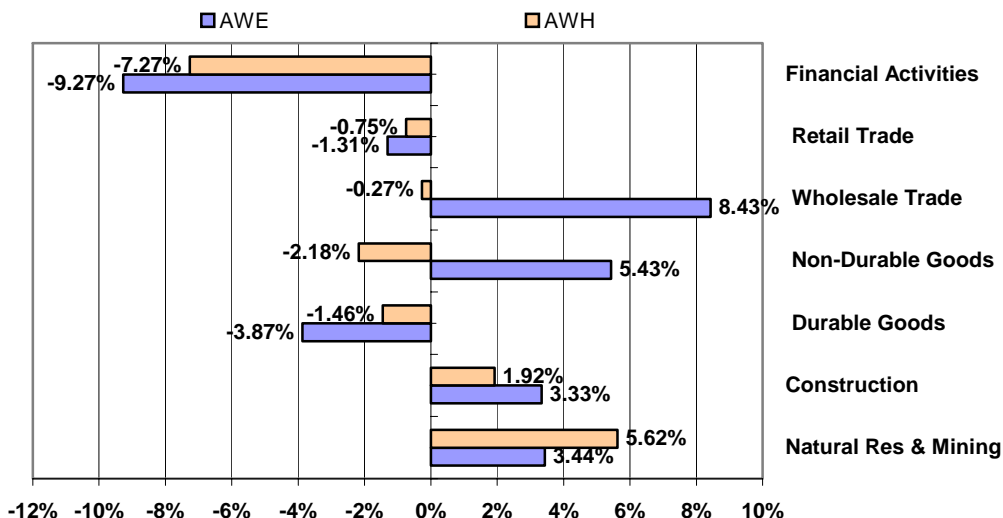
**Prepared by Nebraska Department of Labor.

Statewide Nonfarm Employment (Seasonally Unadjusted)

- New hires of more than 1,800 people in 2002 did little to offset layoffs and closures, causing a decrease of 4,900 jobs from first quarter 2002 through first quarter 2003 in Manufacturing.
- Information lost more than 3,000 jobs over the year as a publishing company announced permanent layoffs and a major telecommunications establishment experienced multiple layoffs throughout the year.
- Professional and Business Services added 1,500 new jobs over the year as telemarketing and advertising companies announced new hires or business expansions throughout the year.

Statewide	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Total Nonfarm	1,427,200	1,421,500	1,429,800
Total Private	1,176,300	1,171,700	1,180,600
Natural Resources & Mining	1,700	1,500	1,900
Construction	54,200	53,800	55,400
Manufacturing	222,300	222,200	226,900
Durable Goods, Mfg	134,000	133,600	136,200
Non-Durable Goods, Mfg	88,300	88,600	90,700
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	295,900	296,300	300,300
Wholesale Trade	61,100	62,500	65,500
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable	28,800	28,700	29,100
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable	26,900	28,400	31,000
Retail Trade	179,000	178,200	179,200
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	55,800	55,600	55,600
Information	34,500	34,200	35,400
Financial Activities	92,900	93,100	93,300
Professional and Business Services	104,200	104,100	103,700
Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt and Remediation Services	59,900	59,800	57,900
Educational and Health Services	195,700	193,500	189,600
Leisure and Hospitality	118,200	116,600	117,800
Other Services	56,700	56,400	56,300
Government	250,900	249,800	249,200
Federal Government	20,200	20,100	19,200
State Government	65,200	64,900	65,100
Local Government	165,500	164,800	164,900
Local Government Education	93,800	93,400	94,900

**Percent Change in Average Weekly Hours (AWH) and Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)
Mar 2002-Mar 2003**



Metropolitan Statistical Area Nonfarm Employment

Cedar Rapids

- Manufacturing jobs declined by 5.4 percent as several key durable goods manufacturers experienced layoffs and site closures throughout the year.
- Professional and Business Services gained 0.79 percent, despite decreases in telemarketing services.

Des Moines

- The booming housing market in 2002, along with reconstruction of Interstate 235, helped push Construction up by 4.8 percent from 1st quarter 2002 to 1st quarter 2003.
- Manufacturing managed to creep up one-half of one percent despite several layoffs.

Dubuque

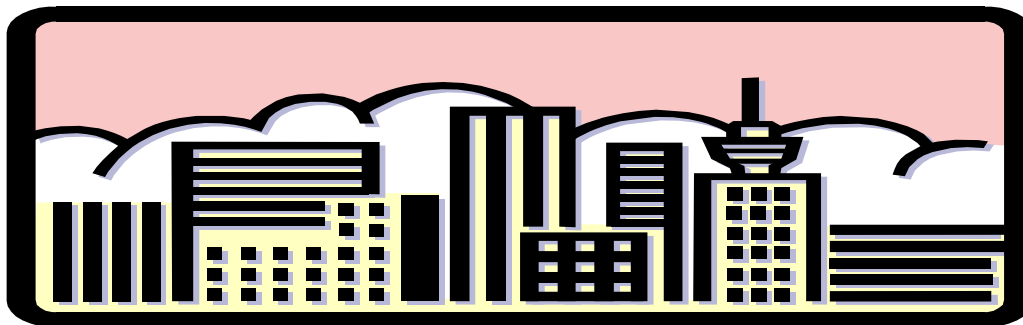
- Despite a largely seasonal drop in total nonfarm employment from 4th quarter 2002 to 1st quarter 2003, the Dubuque MSA remains slightly above the 1st quarter 2002 levels.
- The slight increase from one year ago was distributed across nearly every sector and resulted in a total increase of approximately 300.

Iowa City

- Total nonfarm employment was down 8.3 percent from 1st quarter 2002.
- The largest increase occurred in Education and Health Services, the result of increases in educational support services.

Sioux City

- An increase of 600 or 0.9 percent occurred in the 1st quarter of 2003 compared to the 1st quarter 2002.
- The job loss is 72 percent higher than the loss between 4th quarter 2001 and 1st quarter 2002. Most of these losses were due to seasonal employment changes, except for those in the Leisure and Hospitality industry.
- An increase in the Manufacturing sector has offset losses in Service-Providing sectors, resulting in a slight overall gain in the Waterloo/Cedar Falls MSA nonfarm employment level from one year ago.
- The Manufacturing sector also represents the only gain in employment levels when compared to 4th quarter 2002.
- Declines in Service-Providing and other Goods-Producing sectors from 4th quarter 2002 to 1st quarter 2003 were largely due to seasonal decreases.



CEDAR RAPIDS MSA (Linn County)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Total Nonfarm Employment	116,900	116,600	118,100
Goods-Producing Industries	23,700	23,800	24,900
Natural Resources and Construction	6,100	6,100	6,300
Manufacturing	17,600	17,700	18,600
Service-Producing Industries	93,200	92,800	93,200
Trade and Transportation	25,500	25,300	25,300
Information	5,800	5,900	6,100
Financial Activities	8,700	8,600	8,500
Professional and Business Services	12,600	12,800	12,500
Education and Health	14,900	14,700	14,600
Leisure and Hospitality	8,400	8,300	8,800
Other Services	4,500	4,500	4,600
Government	12,800	12,700	12,800
Federal Government	1,200	1,200	1,200
State Government	500	500	600
Local Government	11,100	11,000	11,000

Des Moines MSA (Dallas, Polk, and Warren Counties)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Total Nonfarm Employment	284,300	282,800	282,100
Goods-Producing Industries	32,800	32,600	32,100
Natural Resources	200	200	300
Construction	13,400	12,900	12,800
Manufacturing	19,200	19,500	19,000
Service-Producing Industries	251,500	250,200	250,000
Trade and Transportation	62,000	61,800	61,900
Information	9,600	9,600	9,600
Financial Activities	44,100	43,900	44,100
Professional and Business Services	29,800	29,700	29,300
Education and Health	34,700	34,500	33,700
Leisure and Hospitality	22,600	22,200	22,700
Other Services	11,800	11,600	11,400
Government	36,900	36,900	37,300
Federal Government	5,500	5,500	5,500
State Government	8,300	8,300	8,200
Local Government	23,100	23,100	23,600

Source: Employment Statistics Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development

DUBUQUE MSA (Dubuque County)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002

Total Nonfarm Employment	50,200	50,300	50,100
Goods-Producing Industries	10,700	10,700	10,800
Natural Resources and Construction	1,900	1,900	1,800
Manufacturing	8,800	8,800	9,000
Service-Producing Industries	39,500	39,600	39,300
Trade and Transportation	10,900	11,000	10,800
Information	1,700	1,600	1,600
Financial Activities	2,200	2,200	2,200
Professional and Business Services	3,400	3,500	3,400
Education and Health	10,100	10,000	10,000
Leisure and Hospitality	4,700	4,800	4,800
Other Services	2,400	2,400	2,400
Government	4,100	4,100	4,100
Federal Government	300	300	300
State Government	200	200	200
Local Government	3,600	3,600	3,600

Iowa City MSA (Linn County)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002

Total Nonfarm Employment	75,500	74,300	74,500
Goods-Producing Industries	7,600	7,500	7,600
Natural Resources and Construction	2,200	2,200	2,400
Manufacturing	5,400	5,300	5,200
Service-Producing Industries	67,900	66,800	66,900
Trade and Transportation	13,100	13,000	12,600
Information	3,300	2,500	2,900
Financial Activities	2,600	2,600	2,500
Professional and Business Services	5,900	5,800	5,800
Education and Health	6,100	6,100	5,500
Leisure and Hospitality	6,200	6,000	6,500
Other Services	1,800	1,800	1,900
Government	28,900	29,000	29,200
Federal Government	1,600	1,600	1,700
State Government	23,200	23,300	23,400
Local Government	4,100	4,100	4,100

Source: Employment Statistics Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development

SIoux CITY MSA (Woodbury County)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Total Nonfarm Employment	64,000	63,800	63,800
Goods-Producing Industries	15,200	15,200	15,500
Natural Resources and Construction	2,300	2,300	2,400
Manufacturing	12,900	12,900	13,100
Service-Producing Industries	48,800	48,600	48,300
Trade and Transportation	14,100	14,000	14,000
Information	800	800	900
Financial Activities	2,800	2,800	2,800
Professional and Business Services	4,600	4,700	4,400
Education and Health	10,300	10,300	10,000
Leisure and Hospitality	5,500	5,400	5,800
Other Services	2,400	2,400	2,400
Government	8,300	8,200	8,000
Federal Government	1,000	1,000	900
Local Government	6,800	6,700	6,600

Waterloo MSA (Black Hawk County)			
Employment By Industry	Mar 2003	Feb 2003	Mar 2002
Total Nonfarm Employment	72,400	72,300	72,500
Goods-Producing Industries	17,300	17,300	16,600
Natural Resources and Construction	2,300	2,300	2,400
Manufacturing	15,000	15,000	14,200
Service-Producing Industries	55,100	55,000	55,900
Trade and Transportation	12,900	13,000	13,500
Information	1,000	900	1,000
Financial Activities	3,500	3,500	3,600
Professional and Business Services	6,000	6,000	6,400
Education and Health	9,900	9,800	9,700
Leisure and Hospitality	6,100	6,000	5,700
Other Services	2,800	2,800	2,900
Government	12,900	13,000	13,100
Federal Government	600	600	600
State Government	5,600	5,600	5,800
Local Government	6,700	6,800	6,700

Source: Employment Statistics Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development

Unemployment Insurance Financial Activity

Regular Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Item	Quarter Ending:		Twelve Months Ending:	
	March 2003	March 2002	March 2003	March 2002
Benefits Paid (\$)	136,848,953	135,053,544	368,493,869	345,631,958
Weeks Compensated	540,929	544,923	1,494,191	1,424,848
First Payments	44,024	44,497	110,938	118,202
Final Payments	8,846	7,959	32,927	23,946
Average Benefit per First Payment (\$)	3,108.51	3,035.12	3,321.62	2,924.08
Average Weekly Benefit (\$)	252.99	247.84	246.62	242.57
Average Duration	-----	-----	13.5	12.1
Exhaustion Rate	-----	-----	28.7%	22.1%

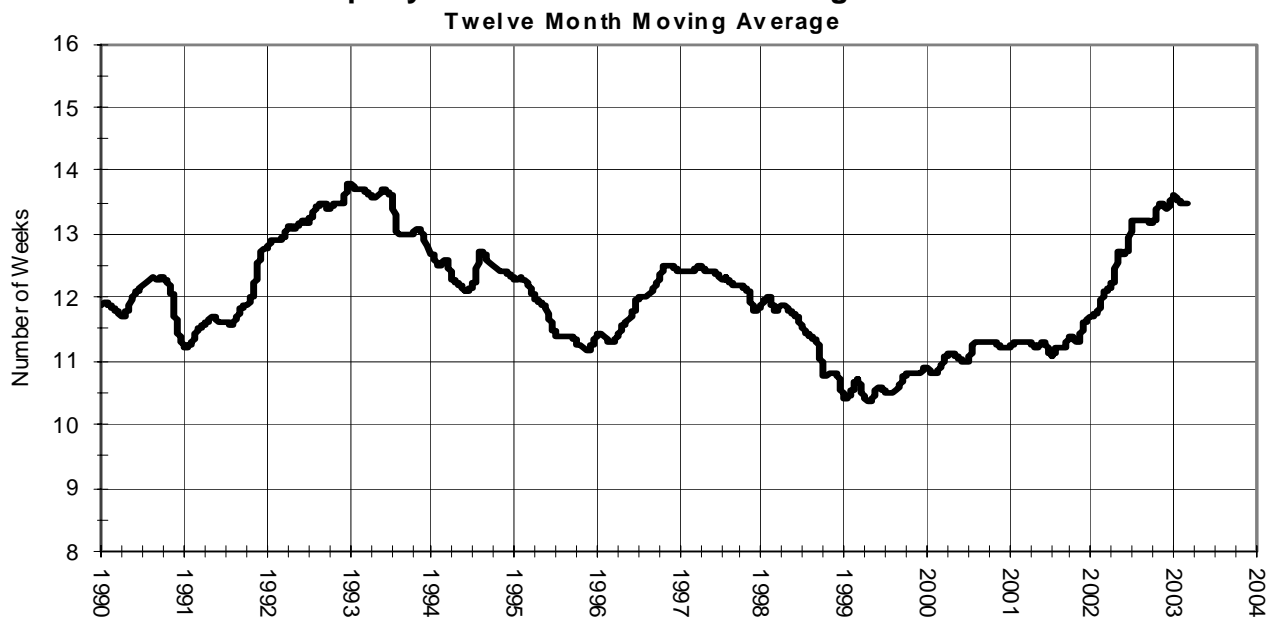
Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation (TEUC)

Item	Quarter Ending:		Twelve Months Ending:	
	March 2003	March 2002	March 2003	March 2002
Benefits Paid (\$)	16,340,523	0	82,571,999	0
Weeks Compensated	69,088	0	349,284	0
First Payments	8,018	0	39,771	0
Final Payments	4,474	0	21,168	0
Average Weekly Benefit (\$)	236.52	0.00	236.40	0.00

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Balance

Item	2003	2002	2001	2000
Trust Fund Balance (March 31)	580,332,905	676,399,249	756,484,837	732,969,836

Unemployment Insurance Average Duration



Exhaustion Rate : A rate computed by dividing the average monthly exhaustions by the average monthly first payments. To allow for the normal flow of claimants through the program, the numerator lags the denominator by 26 weeks, e.g., the exhaustion rate for December 2001 is computed by dividing the average monthly exhaustions for the twelve months ending December 2001, by the average monthly first payments for the twelve months ending June 2001.

Quarterly Industry Review

1st Quarter 2003 By Industry

Manufacturing

Western Iowa

A forklift company will close its Sioux City plant by March, putting 25 workers out of work. Terex Schaeff (Schaeff Incorporated), located just east of Sioux City on U.S. highway 20, will continue to manufacture forklifts in Chicago. The firm, which has been in the Sioux City area since 1947, laid off about 60 workers in December 2001. The company will help workers with employment counseling.

Cardinal IG announced plans in February for a 100,000-square-foot warehouse expansion. The new addition will cost \$2-\$3 million and should be completed in 12-16 months. The Greenfield plant expansion will enable it to add longer lines and add new machines for new products.

In March, Wells Dairy, the LeMars-based maker of Blue Bunny ice cream products, asked for 90 volunteers to take a three-week unpaid leave because of a seasonal slowdown in business and built-up inventory, company officials said. The company is also laying-off 70 temporary workers who have been at the plant for several months, said Dave Smetter, company spokesman. The company usually is successful in getting volunteers to take time off when business slows each year, he said.

RJ Trausch Industries, Inc. has bought the Quality Homes building in Adair with plans to manufacture refrigeration equipment for grocery stores, and companies like Caseys and delicatessens. The company plans to create 30 jobs the first year, 52 jobs the second year and up to 70 jobs the third year.

Construction has started on the new Polaris Industries \$3.6 million expansion to the recreational and utility vehicle maker's production facility in Spirit Lake. Polaris expects the expansion to create approximately 120 jobs in the Iowa Great Lakes area over the next three years.

Central Iowa

Land O'Lakes will move its feed research facilities from Ft. Dodge to St. Louis, MO., officials said. Plans also include consolidating

the Sure-Tech Laboratories Quality Control facility in Ft. Dodge to an Indianapolis, Ind. location. About 34 employees will be affected by the move.

Construction of a \$12.5 million regional check-printing plant in Ankeny is complete, officials say. The company, San Antonio-based Clarke American Checks, plans to hire nearly 90 workers at its plant in Metro North I Industrial Park.

Priority Envelope Inc. will expand to Nevada, creating an expected 40 jobs. The company plans to employ 20 people by the end of the first year. The starting wage will be \$14.50 per hour.

A reduction in salaried staff at the Snap-On Tools plant in Algona, originally announced to take place in late March, came two months earlier than expected. Company spokesman Rick Secor confirms that 20 salaried positions were terminated Thursday, Jan. 23, cutting the plant's salaried employees by one-third. He said the cuts included most departments at the plant. Meanwhile, approximately 70 production workers were recalled.

Thirty jobs are being eliminated from Tyson Foods' IBP Fresh Meats division located in Sioux City, the company announced Friday. The cuts are in the company's Information Services (IS) group, which handles the computer-related aspects of the operations, said company spokesman Gary Mickelson.

Economic officials have agreed to help fund Pella Storm Doors' \$1.7 million expansion in Clear Lake. The Iowa Department of Economic Development approved a \$160,000 loan to help Pella Corp. expand and remodel its existing plant. The IDED loan will be forgiven if the company meets its goal of adding 50 new jobs in the next two years. Pella currently employs about 400 in the Clear Lake plant.

When natural gas prices more than quadrupled over one weekend, United Brick & Tile (formally known as Sioux City Brick & Tile, Adel location) told approximately 42 workers they would be laid off temporarily.

Company officials announced that Woodharbor in Mason City was in the process of purchasing equipment for a new plant in Northwood, Iowa. The Northwood plant is expected to add 150 workers, both manufacturing and office personnel, to the company within two years.

Eastern Iowa

An Italian maker of hydraulic hoses used inside industrial and construction equipment said it will open a \$6.1 million plant in Burlington, which also will serve as its North American headquarters. Milan, Italy-based Alfagomma Group – a supplier to a Case New Holland plant in Burlington – expects to add 120 jobs in the next three years, paying an average starting wage of \$12.51 per hour. Assembly lines should be running by April 1.

West Liberty Foods will build a state-of-the-art food processing facility in Mount Pleasant. The technologically advanced 55,000-square-foot plant will be built utilizing an existing spec building. According to Ken Rutledge, president and CEO of West Liberty Foods, at full capacity, the facility will operate 14 production lines and employ more than 250 people.

Del Monte Foods Co. said it will move its canned soup operation to Illinois, costing about 150 jobs at the H.J. Heinz plant in Muscatine. The plant employs about 600 workers.

Brazeway Inc., a manufacturer of refrigeration components in the Crossroads Business Park, DeWitt, since 2000, announced this week the DeWitt plant will close in the first quarter of 2004. The closing is necessary due to Maytag's decision to close the Galesburg, IL facility.

About 90 employees of a General Electric plant in West Burlington will be laid off due to a drop in orders for the switchgears made there. The layoffs will affect primarily production-level workers. After the layoffs, the plant will employ about 575 production workers and 100 non-production workers.

Wholesale Trade

Central Iowa

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., the world's largest plant genetics company and the No. 1 seed corn supplier, plans to invest \$77 million in Iowa construction over the next five years. The plans include up to \$46 million in new

construction and expansions in Johnston. Other expansions include: added loading dock capacity at its facility in Urbandale, warehouse expansions in Cherokee and Renwick, a new corn research station along Iowa Highway 44 between Grimes and Dallas Center, expansion of a seed quality laboratory in Hedrick, expansion of a research station in Algona and expansion of a DuPont plant in Fort Madison.

Eisai Inc., a U.S. pharmaceutical subsidiary of a Tokyo-based company, has announced it will double its sales team in Des Moines. The company is adding 150 sales representatives nationally with one third of the expansion coming in the company's sales region that encompasses Des Moines. Eisai distributes a drug for Alzheimer's disease called Aricept that is one of the leading products worldwide.

Retail Trade

Western Iowa

Officials confirmed March 4 that the EconoFoods store in Atlantic will be closing, probably at the end of the month. The store employs around 40 people.

Eastern Iowa

Construction on a 160,000-square-foot Lowe's Home Improvement Store likely will begin this spring. The store, to be located at the northwest corner of Highways 6 and 965, north of Coralville, is expected to employ 130 to 160 people.

Dillard's is building a 124,500 square-foot-store at North Park Mall (Davenport) at a cost of about \$9 million. The Dillard's store is expected to open in June and will have about 200 employees.

A K-Mart store in Waterloo is the only one in Iowa slated to be shuttered in the giant retailer's latest round of store closings. The store closings are part of the company's efforts to emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Iowa will have 17 K-Marts after the Waterloo store closes in the next few months.

Transportation & Warehousing

Central Iowa

Completion is in sight for what will be West Branch's biggest business. Contractors are on target for a Feb. 11 occupancy date. That would mean product would begin coming to the new Proctor & Gamble facility in February and March,

with the distribution center fully operational in April.

Eastern Iowa

The jobs of 248 of the 388 employees at Burlington Northern's locomotive repair shop in West Burlington were eliminated Monday because the modern railroad does not require as much maintenance, a spokesman said. The railroad had been studying a proposal to merge the West Burlington and Topeka, KS shops, but no decision has been made. Effective immediately, employment at the West Burlington shop is being cut to 140 workers, a company statement said.

The Des Moines-based Firestone Agricultural Tire Division says it's going ahead with plans for a \$20 million global distribution center south of Ankeny. Construction is expected to create up to \$12 million in business for contractors in central Iowa, Firestone said. Polk County will provide \$4.5 million in tax abatement and other incentives over 10 years. Once completed, the distribution center will employ about 45 people and have about 850,000 square feet of space, an area equal to about 19 football fields.

Thousands applied for 500 positions at Target's new Cedar Falls warehouse. They are seeking 500 full-time warehouse packing and clerical employees for the center, which is set to open in Cedar Falls in late March.

Information

Western Iowa

Communications Data Services has received approval from its parent company to proceed with plans for a new building in Harlan. It is proposed that the new CDS building will be located north of the current CDS facility along U.S. Highway 59. Site preparation for the 55,000 square-foot-building could begin as soon as April, with the new structure ready for occupancy by March 1, 2004.

Central Iowa

A number of Iowa Telecom union telephone technicians face a layoff in the coming weeks due to a slowing economy and the utility board's decision not to fully fund the Newton-based utility's request for a rate hike. Employees of

Iowa Telecom were notified Thursday that up to 29 union-represented technicians will be laid off later this spring from parts throughout Iowa.

Eastern Iowa

Pearson Government Solutions in Iowa City, formerly NCS Pearson, is preparing to hire several hundred workers to handle a Medicare service contract for the federal government at a new building in Coralville. Mary Westbrook, Vice President and General Manager, said the company will begin hiring workers in March. The company will house the 300 to 400 new employees in a \$5 million, 42,000 square-foot, single-story-building under construction on Oakdale Blvd. in the Oakdale Research Park.

Finance & Insurance

Central Iowa

A new business is coming to Huxley and will offer about 50 new jobs for the area workforce. City and company officials announced in December that America's Mortgage and Finance has purchased the current city hall. The Minnesota-based company will move in as soon as Huxley city offices move to their new home in the new facility next to Ballard High School. The move was planned for early January.

Western Iowa

Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield will eliminate 30 positions in Sioux City as part of a rearranging of operations over the next six months. Wellmark spokesperson Angela Feig said the affected customer service employees will have the option of taking comparable positions in a different location, or going to work for a third-party company, First Administrators Incorporated in Sioux City.

Professional & Technical Services

Western Iowa

State lawmakers moved forward Monday with plans to help Trans Ova Genetics, a prized Sioux Center biotechnology company, expand with \$33 million between now and 2005 for construction of an animal protein production facility, a bio-defense facility, a purification plant and a research center with a total cost of \$177 million.

Eastern Iowa

Approximately 25 jobs are part of a "gradual reduction" in administrative staff at the Washington Norwood Promotions factory, a Norwood spokesman said in February. The reduction, representing about 10 percent of the regular factory workforce of 250, should be completed by the end of the month. It was determined that significant efficiencies and savings could be gained by consolidating the front-end, administrative process of the Washington factory into Norwood's Sleepy Eye, MN facility.

Administrative & Waste Services

Western Iowa

Marketlink, Inc., a provider of outbound tele-services, said Monday it would consolidate its operations by expanding two of its call centers and closing a third. The firm's Storm Lake and Fairmont, MN centers will expand this month by 28 percent and 20 percent, respectively. The call center in Estherville, currently with 74 employees, will close Monday, March 31. The company's two Des Moines call centers are not affected.

Ci Direct in Avoca was the site for an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Jan. 31. Currently with 75 employees at their Avoca location, Ci Direct also has 124 employees at the Harlan location. Ci Direct has been hiring area residents to become licensed insurance agents in support of sales programs and non-licensed representatives to support customer care initiatives. It is expected that the total employment in the Avoca center will be near 150 when the facility is fully operational.

Eastern Iowa

Deerfield, Ill.-based APAC Customer Services, Inc. is expanding its Clinton operations and adding 30 additional jobs, making APAC's total local employment more than 180 workers, according to a statement from the company. APAC officials announced the company will expand its Clinton customer interaction center. An unidentified business client – one of the nation's largest communications companies – has selected the APAC Clinton operations to test market a new sales program, APAC officials said.

APAC Customer Services is also hiring 40 to 50 employees at its Burlington center. The additions will mean the telemarketing firm, which also has a local center in Fort Madison, will employ

between 130 and 140 workers at the Burlington facility.

Educational Services

Eastern Iowa

Lichfield Family LP, A company that runs boarding schools for troubled youth, has plans to put one of its academies in the former Charleston Place in Keokuk. The company plans to start with about 30 students and grow to a capacity of around 300 and will eventually employ some 200 teachers, counselors and other staff members.

Health Care & Social Assistance

Central Iowa

Broadlawn's, Polk County's public hospital, has laid off 16 employees, including two vice presidents, and eliminated six open jobs as it tries to remain financially solvent. The cuts will save nearly \$1 million per year. Most of the cuts are in administrative or clerical positions. None of the eliminated jobs is directly involved with patient care.

Eastern Iowa

Cedar Rapids Schools have passed a budget plan that eliminates almost 90 staff members in an effort to cut \$2.9 million from next year's budget. The teacher cuts come on top of the 60 teaching positions the district cut the last two years. Superintendent Lew Finch proposed at a school board meeting March 10 that the board cut 37 full-time equivalent teachers and 48.5 staff members to balance the budget. "We have yet to identify which programs or which positions," Finch told the board.

Accommodation & Food Services

Eastern Iowa

February 25 was the last day of business at Bishop's Buffet in Duck Creek Plaza. Unlike restaurants that close because no one cares, Bishop's has continued to serve hundreds of people daily throughout a period when everyone knew the end was coming. Most customers already had heard the Bettendorf restaurant would be demolished in the next week or two as part of the Duck Creek Plaza renovation.

**The Quarterly Industry Review
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This information is a compilation of public announcements and articles from news-papers and periodicals about business events significant to Iowa labor markets.

The information is intended as a review of events as they are reported. Many included events have not yet occurred.

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